

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 CU-02 IO-10

AID-05 SCCT-01 SY-05 A-01 OPR-02 OMB-01 /083 W

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R 150817Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9641

INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

DIA WASHDC

COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK TH

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 16900

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, TH

SUBJ: STUDENT SYMPATHY RALLY OVER ARREST OF NORTHERN
ACTIVISTS - IV

REF: A. BANGKOK 16355; B. BANGKOK 16720

1. THE BANGKOK NEWSPAPER HEADLINES AUGUST 15 ANNOUNCED
THAT THE KHUKRIT GOVERNMENT WILL DROP THE CHARGES AGAINST
THE NINE FARMER AND STUDENT ACTIVISTS ARRESTED IN LAMPHUN
PROVINCE AUGUST 3. THIS PLAYS OUT A SCENARIO SUGGESTED
IN REF A.

2. SOME NEWSPAPERS SUGGEST THAT THE STUDENT ACTIVISTS
WILL CONTINUE THEIR DEMONSTRATION IN ORDER TO PRESSURE
THE GOVERNMENT TO ACCELERATE POLICE INVESTIGATIONS OF
RECENT MURDERS OF FARMER LEADERS. PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR
A PROLONGED RALLY SHOULD CONTINUE TO WANE, SINCE THE
CABINET HAS MADE ITS CONCESSION.

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3. COMMENTS: IT IS NOT CLEAR YET WHY THE GOVERNMENT TOOK THIS STEP, BECAUSE KHUKRIT'S EARLIER STATEMENT THAT HE WOULD NOT RELEASE THE LAMPHUN 9 HAD AN AUTHENTIC AND DETERMINED RING. THE GOVERNMENT MOVE CAME AFTER KHUKRIT HAD EARLIER DENIED TO PRESSMEN THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD RELEASE THE DEFENDANTS (FBIS BK140819Y AUG 1975). WHATEVER PERSUADED KHUKRIT TO DEFER, MUST HAVE COME FROM AN AUTHORITATIVE QUARTER. CHULALONGKON AND THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS MENTIONED TO POLITICAL OFFICERS AUGUST 15 THAT THEY WERE SURPRISED AT THE GOVERNMENT'S NEW LINE, ALTHOUGH THEY FELT THAT SOME COMPROMISE ON THE GOVERNMENT'S PART WAS THE ONLY WAY TO DEFUSE THE SITUATION.

4. THE STUDENT ACTIVISTS MAY HAVE ACHIEVED ONLY A PYRRHIC VICTORY. THE GENERAL PUBLIC WILL NOT BE PLEASED THAT THE PAMPHUN DEFENDANTS, LIKE APRIL'S NAKHON SI THAMMARAT DEFENDANTS, WERE RELEASED. THE GOVERNMENT DID A RESPECTABLE JOB OF REPRESENTING ITS CASE TO THE PUBLIC, SO THE STUDENTS WILL TAKE THE BLAME FOR THE RELEASE OF THE "GUILTY" DEFENDANTS. THERE WILL BE CONTINUED PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT TO RESIST PROTESTOR DEMANDS. HIS SUDDEN SHIFT MAY HAVE SHAKEN KHUKRIT'S APLOMB, BUT NOT HIS GRIP ON THE REINS OF POWER. WHITEHOUSE

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